



ARMY CONTRACTING AGENCY

Congressional Inquiries Guide

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ACA CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to give Army Contracting Agency (ACA) personnel a better understanding of the procedures governing responses to Congressional inquiries by the ACA. The guide helps to meet the requirements of Army Regulation (AR) 1-20, Legislative Liaison. It is important that each contracting office work as a team with the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting (PARC) and the ACA Headquarters (HQ) Congressional Affairs Contact Officer (CACO) to provide the best possible response to Members of Congress in a timely manner.

In preparing the guide, guidance from the Army Office of Congressional Legislative Liaison (OCLL) was used as a starting point. Congressional inquiries are requests for information from Members of Congress, their committees and staff and the standard Army response time is five working days. Inquiries can be received as:

- a) Formal taskings from OCLL;
- b) E-mails from the Programs Division of OCLL;
- c) Direct letters from Members of Congress and their staff to the ACA Director, ACA PARCs, and Directors of Contracting Offices, Contracting Centers or Regional Offices;
- d) Requests for personal briefings by a Member of Congress and/or their senior staff;
- e) Questions for the Record (QFRs) submitted by committees following Army testimony at a hearing; and
- f) Assists with requests to coordinate and review proposed responses to Congressional inquiries by Garrison Commanders, Installation Management Command (IMCOM), Army Assistant Secretary for Installation & Environment (ASA (I&E)) or Army Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM).

This guide is divided into five parts:

Part I, Receipt of a Congressional Inquiry

Part II, Coordination of Response

Part III, Signature Authority for Response

Part IV, Closeout of Congressional Inquiry

Part V, Additional Concerns and ACA CACO Assistance

Note: This guide is intended to be a source of information about policies that are prescribed elsewhere in formal directives. It does not in itself establish any policy and does not provide any direction that would impact the rights and obligations of the Army or its contractors.

PART I -- RECEIPT OF CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES

1.1 OCLL TASKINGS

The Army Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison (OCLL) Inquiry Division normally receives most of the Congressional inquiries from Members of Congress and their staffs and usually distributes these taskings via e-mail or the Department of the Army Headquarters tracking system.

1.1.1 Tasker Cover Sheet

A formal OCLL tasker has a cover sheet which:

- a) Assigns the tasker to a specific Army office;
- b) Gives an eight digit HQDA Tracking Control ID number ;
- c) Provides the task officer's name and phone number;
- d) Lists the tasked agency such as ACA or SAAL;
- e) Indicates the type of action required to complete the tasking such as a "Direct Reply" to the member;
- f) Gives an actual suspense date for the action to be completed by;
- g) Lists the Constituent's name or member's name when it's a member's personal inquiry;
- h) Gives a brief description of the inquiry's major concerns in a subject line;
- i) Provides the member's name;
- j) Has a remarks section for additional directions from the OCLL Task Officer; and
- k) Assigns keywords used by OCLL to locate similar inquiries in the HQDA Tracking System.

1.1.2 Attachments

The formal OCLL tasker has attachments which generally contain a letter or fax cover sheet from the member's office with the member's information about the constituent's concerns. The member's letter or fax will generally identify where the response should be sent, such as the member's district office and the member's point of contact. The constituent's information can include privacy disclaimers from the constituent, typed or handwritten letters or notes and backup papers the constituent furnished to the member. Members personal inquiries are generally made by a formal letter from the Member of Congress.

1.2 E-MAILS, FAXES OR PHONE CALLS FROM THE PROGRAMS DIVISION OF OCLL

Frequently when a member or senior staffer needs information very quickly, they will call, fax or e-mail, the Army's House or Senate liaison offices or the OCLL Programs Division office directly. The liaison office will then contact

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ACA contracting offices directly. If you receive such an inquiry, immediately notify your PARC office and the ACA CACO for guidance on your response. Do not respond directly to these Congressional inquiries unless specifically directed by either the PARC office or the ACA CACO.

1.3 DIRECT INQUIRIES

Frequently, Members of Congress or their staffs will contact the ACA directly. If you receive a direct inquiry from a Member of Congress or their staff, immediately contact your PARC office and the ACA CACO for guidance. Do not respond directly to the member's office unless specifically directed by either the PARC office or the ACA CACO.

1.3.1 Phone contact

If the direct contact is in the form of a telephone inquiry from a member or a staffer -- be courteous, take down the information a member or a staffer -- be courteous, take down the information the member or staffer wants addressed and indicate that you must provide this information to the ACA CACO and OCLL before you can respond to the request. Call your PARC office immediately and e-mail both the PARC office and the ACA CACO with the pertinent information regarding the Congressional inquiry -- Member's name, staffer's name and phone number, date and time of call and brief description of the information or concern that needs to be addressed and the timeframe for a response. You can provide the caller with OCLL's general fax inquiry numbers (703) 697-6988/ 3847/ 3840. Generally, the PARC office will work with the ACA CACO to handle a direct phone request and provide advice on how to handle the inquiry.

1.3.2 Direct correspondence

If a letter or fax is received directly from a member's office, furnish a copy of the correspondence or fax to your PARC's office immediately. Generally, the PARC office will provide a copy of the inquiry to the ACA CACO or request an electronic copy to be furnished to the ACA CACO.

If a letter or fax is received by either the PARC office or ACA HQ, furnish a copy of the correspondence or fax to the ACA CACO as soon as possible. The ACA CACO will assist in determining how the inquiry will be handled.

1.4 BRIEFING REQUEST

Requests for personal briefings to members or their senior staffs generally originate from the OCLL Programs Division and sometimes from the OCLL House or Senate Liaison offices. Depending on the subject matter to be discussed during the briefing, the ACA CACO will coordinate the request with ACA Director who will determine who should give the briefing and the ACA attendees. If ACA PARCs or any ACA contracting offices receive direct requests from members or their staffers for personal briefings, advise the ACA CACO immediately, to ensure that OCLL is aware of the briefing request.

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1.5 QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD (QFR)

After testimony "on the Hill" by senior Army officials before committees of Congress, questions for the record (QFR) are compiled and coordinated by either OCLL or the Secretary of the Army for Financial Management, Budget Liaison (SAFM(BUL)) and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)). Generally, QFRs from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees (HASC or SASC) and their respective Subcommittees are handled by OCLL. QFRs from either House or Senate Appropriations (HAC or SAC) or the House or Senate Budget Committees and their respective subcommittees are handled by SAFM-BUL. ASA(ALT) generally receives the QFRs from either OCLL or SAFM(BUL) and compiles the ACA response for ASA(ALT) review. The ACA CACO coordinates the ACA response as required with HQ staff and ACA PARCs. On occasion, OCLL or SAFM-BUL has gone directly to an ACA PARC for a QFR response. If an ACA PARC receives a direct OCLL or SAFM-BUL QFR request, notify the ACA CACO immediately to ensure ACA HQ awareness of the QFR.

1.6 GARRISON COMMANDERS, IMCOM, ACSIM OR OTHER ARMY ACTIVITY

ACA Directorates of Contracting, Contracting Centers, and Regional Offices may receive copies of Congressional inquiries made to Garrison Commanders, IMCOM, ACSIM or other Army activity. When these inquiries are received, contact your PARC and appropriate liaison officer (LNO) immediately to ascertain whether or not ACA should assist in responding to the inquiry or have the Congressional inquiry re-directed to ACA for a response if the matter pertains to an ACA contracting issue. The ACA CACO will work with the PARC and/or LNO to determine whether ACA assistance is required, or whether the Congressional inquiry should be transferred to ACA for a response. When a transfer is required, the ACA CACO will work with OCLL, IMO CACO or ACSIM CACOs to ensure the transfer is expeditiously made and the deadline date for an ACA response is appropriately adjusted.

PART II COORDINATION OF RESPONSES

2.1 OCLL TASKINGS

Most of the OCLL taskings will be forwarded to the relevant ACA PARC offices with the ACA CACO, for further coordination by the relevant ACA contracting office. Direct OCLL taskings to an ACA contracting office shall be coordinated between that ACA contracting office and their ACA PARC office. The ACA CACO may provide additional guidance about coordination of OCLL taskings especially if the ACA HQ has special concerns regarding issues which need to be addressed in the ACA response or the ACA Director has specific

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concerns about the inquiry. In some instances, ACA HQ legal counsel and PARC legal counsel or the ACA HQ Director of Small Business may lead the ACA coordination effort.

2.2 E-MAILS, FAXES OR PHONE CALLS FROM PROGRAMS DIVISION OF OCLL

E-mails, faxes or phone calls from OCLL Programs Division shall be coordinated through the ACA CACO. The ACA CACO, after receiving a copy of the OCLL Program inquiry, will coordinate with the pertinent ACA PARC office about the type of response to be provided and determine which ACA office will respond directly to OCLL Programs Division. The ACA PARC office will coordinate and review all OCLL Programs Division responses prior to release to either the ACA CACO or OCLL Programs Division. The ACA CACO must receive a copy of all direct replies to the OCLL Programs Division. If the ACA CACO provides the ACA response to OCLL Programs Division, an electronic copy will be furnished to the ACA PARC and ACA contracting office for their files.

2.3 RESPONDING TO DIRECT INQUIRIES

ACA contracting offices receiving direct inquiries from members or their staffs shall coordinate their response with their PARC office, and send either a copy of the direct inquiry or an e-mail, as outlined under Part I to the ACA CACO. The PARC office in consultation with the ACA CACO will determine how the response will be handled if it requires more than a direct referral to OCLL Inquiry Division.

2.4 RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR PERSONAL BRIEFINGS

Generally, the ACA CACO will assist in coordination of a personal briefing by the ACA Director or HQ staff. ACA Contracting Offices shall coordinate personal briefings with their PARC office and notify the ACA CACO. Frequently, Garrison Commanders, IMCOM, ACSIM or ASA (I&E) will request ACA staff to either accompany them or participate in briefings to members or their staffs. Notify the ACA PARC office, ACA LNO office and ACA CACO about these local briefings and any follow up actions from these briefings.

2.5 RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD (QFR)

Questions for the Record (QFR) must be coordinated through the ACA CACO and the PARC office. The ACA CACO will staff the response through ACA HQ and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA (ALT)) as required. Sample formats for QFR responses can be obtained from the ACA CACO.

2.6 ASSISTING GARRISON COMMANDERS, IMCOM, ACSIM OR OTHER ARMY ACTIVITY

When ACA Directorates of Contracting (DOCs), Contracting Centers and Regional Offices provide assistance to Garrison Commanders, IMCOM, ACSIM or other Army activities in responding to Congressional inquiries, their responses

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must be coordinated with their ACA PARC office. The ACA CACO may also coordinate ACA responses with the ACA PARC offices and their respective DOCs, Contracting Centers and Regional offices for IMCOM, ACSIM or other Army activities.

PART III -- SIGNATURE AUTHORITY FOR RESPONSES

3.0 GENERAL

AR 1-20, Legislative Liaison, requires that an appropriate official knowledgeable of the facts relative to the inquiry, who is not a subject of the inquiry and has no conflict of interest, should review and sign the ACA response.

3.1 OCLL TASKINGS SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

Signature authority for responses to OCLL Taskings is generally either the ACA PARCs or the Director of the ACA when the OCLL Tasker authorizes a direct reply to a Member of Congress. On occasion, the ACA Small and Disadvantaged Business (SADBU) or ACA Chief Counsel may be the signatory by OCLL request. The ACA CACO will designate the signature authority when the OCLL tasker is assigned. On occasion, OCLL may direct a higher level Army signature for a particular response and the ACA CACO will staff the ACA response with the higher level authority such as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Policy and Procurement (DASA (P&P)) or ASA(ALT). Copies of the signed responses by ACA PARCs must be furnished to ACA CACO. The ACA CACO will provide the ACA PARC office with a copy of either the ACA Director's signed response or higher level Army signed response when the ACA PARC office has assisted with the response.

3.2 E-MAILS, FAXES OR PHONE CALLS FROM PROGRAMS DIVISION OF OCLL – RESPONSE AUTHORITY

Response authority for e-mails, faxes or phone calls from the Programs Division of OCLL is generally the ACA CACO. The ACA CACO will furnish a copy of the ACA response to OCLL to both the relevant ACA PARC office and ACA contracting office. If OCLL requires a response within a very short time frame, Directors of Contracting offices, Centers or Regional offices may respond directly to OCLL when directed by their ACA PARC office. Copies or notifications of the response shall be furnished to the ACA PARC office and the ACA CACO.

3.3 DIRECT INQUIRIES SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

The signature authorities for responses to direct inquiries by Members of Congress and their staff are generally the ACA PARCs, unless either the ACA Director or ACA CACO indicates otherwise. The ACA PARCs may allow the Directors of Contracting offices, Centers or Regional offices to sign responses on their behalf, but the responses must be approved by the PARC prior to release. On occasion, the Director of the ACA may want to respond directly back to the

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Member of Congress. When the ACA Director desires to make the ACA response to the member's direct inquiry, the ACA CACO will advise the PARC office and the ACA contracting office that received the direct inquiry on how the ACA response will be made. The ACA CACO will ensure that the both the PARC office and ACA contracting office receive a synopsis of the action taken by the Director and copies of any signed documents such as the ACA Director's letter to the member.

3.4 PERSONAL BRIEFINGS APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Generally, personal briefings only require approval of the briefing materials by either the ACA Director or ACA PARCs. If there are action items from the personal briefings, the ACA Director or ACA PARC would be the signatory authority for release of the action items to the member and their staff. When ACA staff is accompanying ACSIM, IMCOM, Garrison Commanders or other Army activities to brief members or their staffers and the ACA receives action items, the ACA Director or ACA PARC will approve the release of the response to ACSIM, IMCOM, Garrison Commanders or other Army activities. The ACA CACO may assist with the coordination and approvals as needed.

3.5 QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD (QFR) SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

The signature authority for responses to QFRs is the ACA Director. The ACA PARCs will indicate their approval of the QFR response prior to submission to ACA HQ for the ACA Director's signature. The ACA CACO will ensure PARC approval and signature by the ACA Director prior to submission of the QFR response to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA (ALT)) or other Army office designated by OCLL.

3.6 GARRISON COMMANDERS, IMCOM, ACSIM OR OTHER ARMY ACTIVITY APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Generally when the ACA is providing input to the Garrison Commanders, IMCOM, ACSIM or other Army activity responses, either the ACA PARC or ACA Director approval is required. In those unusual instances where both the ACA and the Garrison Commander or IMCOM or ACSIM or the other Army activity will sign a joint response, the ACA CACO will assist with coordination. Generally, ACA PARCs and Garrison Commanders will sign joint responses. Either ACA PARCs or the ACA Director can sign joint responses with IMCOM or PEO EIS depending on the direction of the ACA Director. The ACA Director will sign joint responses with ACSIM or other Army activities.

PART IV – CLOSEOUT OF CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY

4.1 OCLL TASKINGS CLOSEOUTS

Once an ACA PARC, ACA SADB, ACA Chief Counsel or the ACA Director has signed a response, the original signed and dated response will be mailed to the office designated by the Member of Congress. An electronic copy

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of the signed and dated response shall be furnished to the ACA CACO for closeout with the ASA (ALT) CACO and OCLL as required. The ACA CACO will also closeout the OCLL tasker with the ACA Executive Officer (XO). If the ACA CACO receives notice that either ASA (ALT) CACO or OCLL has closed out the OCLL tasker, the ACA CACO will furnish such notice to the ACA PARC office and the ACA XO, as appropriate.

4.2 CLOSEOUTS FOR E-MAILS, FAXES OR PHONE CALLS FROM THE PROGRAMS DIVISION OF OCLL

Generally, the ACA CACO will close out e-mail, faxes or phone calls from the Programs Division of OCLL unless time constraints require a closeout by the ACA PARC office responding to the inquiry. If the ACA CACO closes out the action, the ACA PARC office will be notified of the closure. If the ACA PARC office does the closeout, a notification of completion will be provided to the ACA CACO with the date and time of closeout and a copy of the response sent. This notification of completion will assist the ACA CACO if there are any follow-up requests on the same subject from the member's office.

4.3 DIRECT INQUIRIES CLOSEOUTS

Generally the ACA office (DOC, Center or Regional office) responding to the member's direct inquiry should notify their ACA PARC office when the direct inquiry has been completed. The ACA PARC office will then notify the ACA CACO that the response is completed and furnish a notification of completion. If the ACA HQ responds to the direct inquiry, the ACA CACO will close out the direct inquiry and notify the ACA XO, ACA PARC and ACA contracting office that provided assistance of the closeout.

4.4 CLOSEOUT FOR PERSONAL BRIEFINGS

Most personal briefings to Members of Congress and their staff do not require formal closeout actions unless there are follow-up action items. When follow-up actions are required, the ACA PARC and ACA CACO shall be notified when the follow-up action is completed and a copy of the completed action shall be provided to the ACA PARC office and the ACA CACO in case additional inquiries are made by the member or their staff at a later date.

4.5 CLOSEOUT OF QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD (QFR)

When the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA (ALT)) or a member of their staff approves the QFR, the ASA(ALT) CACO will closeout the QFR and notify the ACA CACO. When the ACA Director approves the QFR response, the ACA CACO and ACA HQ XO will closeout the QFR. Once the QFR has been approved, the ACA CACO will furnish a copy of the approved response, when available, to the ACA PARC that provided input for the response.

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4.6 GARRISON COMMANDERS, IMCOM, ACSIM OR OTHER ARMY ACTIVITY CLOSEOUT

Generally, when ACA Directorates of Contracting, Contracting Centers and Regional offices have submitted their approved responses to the Garrison Commanders, the action is considered closed. They should notify their respective PARCs and the ACA CACO of the date that their approved responses were submitted to the Garrison Commander, so the PARC and ACA CACO can closeout the action. IMCOM, ACSIM and other Army activities actions will generally be closed out by the ACA CACO and ACA HQ XO upon notification from the receiving activity (IMCOM, ACSIM or other Army Activity). Copies of the signed responses when available will be furnished to the ACA PARC by either the ACA CACO, ACA Director of Liaison or the ACA HQ XO.

PART V – ADDITIONAL CONCERNS AND ACA CACO ASSISTANCE

5.1 General

When concerns or questions arise on the coordination of any Congressional inquiry that seems to be outside the scope of this ACA Congressional Inquiries Guide, these concerns or questions must be immediately addressed with the ACA CACO. The ACA CACO will provide assistance in resolving the concern or question and make an appropriate response to the member or staffer.

5.2 Response Deadlines and Extensions

ACA Congressional policy is to answer Congressional inquiries in a timely manner and meet OCLL deadlines. Advise the ACA CACO at least two business days in advance of the official OCLL due date if the OCLL tasker requires an extension. A rationale and projected date of completion must be provided to the ACA CACO for OCLL to approve extensions for responses. This information will be forwarded to OCLL to assist them in making a determination whether or not to grant an extension for an ACA response. Be advised that even if OCLL grants a time extension for a response, the initial due date is the official date used for determining lateness of an ACA response.

5.3 ACA CACO Contact Information

The ACA CACO can be reached at (703) 681-9292 or DSN: 761-9292 and the Alternate CACO can be reached at (703) 681-1042 or DSN: 761-1042. Congressional information can be faxed to either the ACA CACO or the Alternate CACO at (703) 681-1020.